UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.5/47/58
1 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session
FIFTH COMMITTEE
Agenda items 104 and 76

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993

QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Establishment of seven United Nations interim offices

Revised estimates under section 31, Public information

Report of the Secretary-General

INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 1992/40 of 30 July 1992, entitled "Activities of the United Nations system in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States", the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed the importance it attached to an integrated United Nations system approach to, and presence in, the region. In his note to the General Assembly on the comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system, 1/ the Secretary-General set out the action taken to date to develop such approach and to establish a unified presence in some countries of the region. As indicated in that document, the Secretary-General, in March 1992, decided to establish integrated United Nations offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. He entrusted the responsibility for the establishment of these offices, which are initially to focus on development assistance and information support to these countries in transition, to the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

2. Joint missions were conducted in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan to assess requirements for a unified United Nations/UNDP presence, including priority areas for development cooperation and public information needs, and, to negotiate host country agreements. Such

agreements were concluded and signed with all six countries. Subsequently, the Secretary-General decided to initiate action for the creation of a United Nations interim office in Georgia. Also, the Governing Council of UNDP agreed to finance its share of the cost of establishing the United Nations interim offices during the current biennium 1992-1993, through its decisions 92/29 and 92/43 of 26 May 1992. 2/

A. Objectives and functions of the interim offices

3. United Nations interim offices are established to provide a unified United Nations presence and to facilitate practical and effective dialogue between the United Nations and its programmes and the new Member States. The initial arrangements do not prejudge any future specialized agency presence in the countries concerned. Major activities of the United Nations interim offices will include special projects to support the launching of economic transition, strengthening of the role of national media and their infrastructure, liaison with local institutions, feedback from published material on issues of direct concern to the Organization and overall coverage of issues relevant to the United Nations and to the host country.

B. Administrative and financial arrangements and budgetary requirements

1. Staffing

4. Each interim office will have one United Nations representative and one United Nations deputy representative to represent the United Nations and its programmes as a whole. There would thus be a total of 14 Professional and higher level and 35 local-level Field Service posts for the seven interim offices. Of this total, the United Nations would provide for seven Professional posts (three D-1, one P-5, three P-4) and seven local-level Field Service posts.

2. Non-staff start-up and recurrent operating costs

5. For the biennium 1992-1993, the United Nations and UNDP have agreed in principle that the start-up and recurrent operating costs requirements for the seven United Nations interim offices would be equally shared, with the understanding that the United Nations share of such costs would not exceed $85,000 per interim office ($45,000 in start-up costs and $40,000 for recurrent operating costs requirements for 12 months). For seven interim offices, the total United Nations share would be $595,000 ($315,000 in start-up costs and $280,000 for recurrent operating costs for 12 months). The recurrent costs and the distribution thereof would be reviewed from time to time. Major deviations from the standard office profile and associated costs described above would be subject to mutual agreement.

6. The United Nations/UNDP operating cost estimates take full account of the agreement by the respective host Governments concerned to provide, at a minimum, suitable rent-free premises for the interim offices. The United Nations/UNDP operating cost estimates may also be partially affected in future by host Government contributions towards local office costs (GLOC). Such contributions would be determined and negotiated in accordance with UNDP established policies and procedures in line with the relevant provisions of the UNDP Standard Basic Agreements (SBAA) and relevant decisions of the UNDP Governing Council.

3. Administrative and financial arrangements

7. UNDP would provide day-to-day administrative and financial support to the interim offices on behalf of the United Nations. Details of such arrangements are currently being worked out.

C. Additional requirements under section 31, Public information, of the regular budget

8. With regard to the requirements for staff at the Professional and higher levels in 1993 (three D-1, one P-5, three P-4 posts), the number of posts identified at this point for temporary redeployment in the context of the new treatment of vacancies 3/ does not match the additional staffing requirements anticipated as a result of decisions of the General Assembly at its current session, especially posts at senior levels. Accordingly, it is proposed to redeploy temporarily four posts (one D-1 and three P-4) identified as currently available for such redeployment. As regards the other Professional staffing requirements in 1993 (two D-1 and one P-5), it is proposed that these be met by temporary redeployment of posts identified for redeployment through the continuing application of the new treatment of vacancies during 1993. To cover related requirements until such posts are identified, it is estimated that a provision of $163,200 will be needed for general temporary assistance, representing six work-months for the three posts. Should there be any difficulty in identifying posts at the appropriate levels before 30 June 1993, a report would be submitted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Requirements for 1994 and beyond will be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

9. On the basis of the above-mentioned assumptions contained in paragraphs 4 to 6 above, additional requirements under section 31, Public information, totalling $934,600 would be required in connection with the United Nations share of the cost of establishment of seven United Nations interim offices during the current biennium 1992-1993, as follows:

		$
Established posts		
(a)	General temporary assistance relating to the 7 local-level Field Service posts	176 400
(b)	General temporary assistance relating to 3 Professional posts (2 D-1 and 1 P-5)	163 200
	Subtotal staff costs	339 600
Operating costs		
(a)	Non-recurrent start-up costs comprising motor vehicle; telecommunications equipment and computers; office furniture, equipment and supplies (using UNDP/Inter-agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) "Office start-up package" to derive maximum benefits of economies of scale through unified approach)	315 000
(b)	Recurrent operating costs for 12 months (communications, maintenance of premises and equipment, miscellaneous supplies and services, services, travel, etc.)	280 000
	Subtotal operating costs	595 000
	TOTAL	934 600

D. Contingency fund

10. It will be recalled that, under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under the same procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed resources available from the contingency fund, those activities can be implemented only through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of projected activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred until a later biennium. A consolidated statement of all programme budget implications and revised estimates will be submitted to the Assembly towards the end of its current session.

11. No activities are proposed for termination, deferral, curtailment or modification in the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, in order to finance the United Nations share of the cost of the establishment of United

Nations interim offices proposed under section 31, Public information. In the event, therefore, that such resources are not available from the contingency fund, these activities would have to be postponed, as provided for in the criteria for the use of the contingency fund adopted by the General Assembly in the annex to its resolution 42/211 of 21 December 1987. It is the intention of the Secretary-General, however, to re-examine the current allocation of resources for public information in the context of the preparation of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

E. Summary

12. As indicated above, an additional appropriation of $934,600 would be required under section 31, Public information, of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, in connection with the establishment of seven United Nations interim offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Notes

1/ A/47/419/Add.3.

2/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 8 (E/1992/28), annex I.

3/ A/C.5/47/2 and Corr.1, paras. 21-23.